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Next Belles Meeting is March 10

MARCH 2001



THE JOURNEY

NEWSLETTER OF THE BUFFALO BELLES

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IS THIS YOUR
LAST ISSUE OF
THE JOURNEY?

PROBABLY SO
IF YOU HAVE
NOT RENEWED

Tina's Valentine Ordeal

It was a good night at Compton's Fetish night on February 13th. There was a decent turn out and it all ended about 2:00 AM on the 14th. (Valentine's Day) There were just a few of us left and we relaxed for a few minutes before starting for home. Mistress Kali Ward and Gerry (A PEP Board Member and a good friend) had driven there together and I was parked across the street. We all left together and headed north up Niagara Street. Kali and Gerry were following me. They got caught at a light and I continued on. I was approaching my turn on Ontario to get on the Thruway for home. It was a quiet clear, dry night and I was just enjoying the drive home. I wasn't tired and the evening had been a relaxing one.

I had a green arrow as I approached and there were no cars in sight. I had just started to make my turn and out of the corner of my eye I saw something big and black heading right for me. I was very unbelieving as to what I knew it to be. One-second later I was spinning around in the road in the opposite direction I had been going. The sound was one I had heard before and it never gets out of your head. My engine revved to almost full throttle and the transmission was stuck in reverse. I put my foot on the brake and turned the key off as fast as I could. I was stopped.

I tried to get the key out of the ignition, but it was all jammed up. A quick check of my body and all seemed fine. Thank you seat belt! It then set in what had happened and I tried the door to get out. I had to push twice to get the door open, but it did. I got out and was so hoping that Kali and Gerry were coming. I saw them and then felt a little relief.

My next thought was what to do about the way I looked. I had lost my wig and one shoe in the impact.

I felt I should get myself back together as best I could and went back into the car to get my wig and shoe. As I put my shoe on I saw that my knee was cut, but it seemed to have stopped bleeding. By now Kali had realized that it WAS me and was running over to see if I was OK.

She said, (with great concern) "Are you all right."

I replied, "yes, except for my knee."

Then she asked what happened?

I emotionally remarked, "He didn't have his lights on"

She then consoled me and I asked if the other guy was OK?

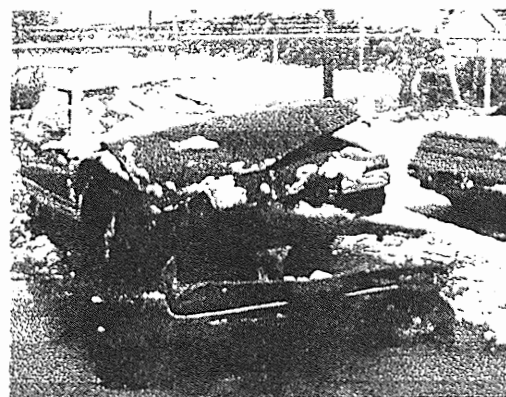
She looked around and asked. "Where is he?"

I pointed to the car that was 50 or so yards back in the other direction on the sidewalk. Kali then ran over to see if she could help and after a few seconds there I saw her back away from the car and run back over to me as I heard the other car starting up! When she got to me she told me the guy was totally wasted.

Kali said that when she asked him if he was all right, he said in a mumble. "Get the F... away from me."

We then saw the car start to move and Kali and I looked at each other in disbelief.

Continued on Page 5



'Faux Queens' bend gender-bending

November 22, 2000

SAN FRANCISCO, California (Reuters) - Wendi Plains is a drag queen trapped in a woman's body, a female impersonator who has the misfortune of being female herself.

Tragic? Not quite. For Plains and others like her, there is the "Faux Queen Pageant," where a gaggle of real-life ladies strut their stuff at the contest billed as the world's one and only event for women perfecting the drag queen's cocky swagger.

Call it crazy, call it weird, but for San Francisco just call it just another gender-bending way of being wacky and wonderful, said Ruby Toosday, an honest-to-goodness (read male) drag queen who helped organize the 6th annual contest.

"It is a chance for the women to be outrageous, get up on stage and do stuff way over the top," said Toosday, dressed in a slinky black mini-dress and black garters. "As far as I know this is the only event of its kind anywhere."

Over-the-top indeed. Think outlandishly big hair, dragon lady stick-on nails, strategically placed extra padding, and way, way too much makeup for the 13 contestants vamping it up at the event, held in a bar in Potrero Hill neighborhood, an eclectic mix of newcomers and longtime residents.

Plains, who went trashy cowgirl in a frilly powder blue skirt with white fringes, ruffled red shirt, boots, plastic silver eyelashes and loads of glitter, wowed the crowd with her own take on the "All-American" girl. Marching on stage with dozens of stars dangling off her cowgirl hat, Plains lip-synched the patriotic country tune "US of A." while two Boy Scouts in uniforms saluted, waved

American flags and lighted her sparklers for a truly grand finale.

"For me it's about having a good time," said Plains, normally known as Julia Mitchell, who took top honors in the contest that raised money for two local nonprofit groups. "I kind of feel like drag queens shouldn't have all the fun."

It also gives the women a venue to realize their drag-queen dreams as many clubs featuring female impersonators do not allow real women to perform, Toosday said.

While San Francisco has long boasted "virgin queen" events for first-time male drag artists and "drag king" contests for women dressing up as men, Toosday and others decided to launch the Faux queen contest after hearing tales of female friends who could not find places to exhibit their feminine sides.

"I sort of heard stories of friends who got fired (from drag clubs) for being women," Toosday said. "It seemed like we had definitely hit a nerve."

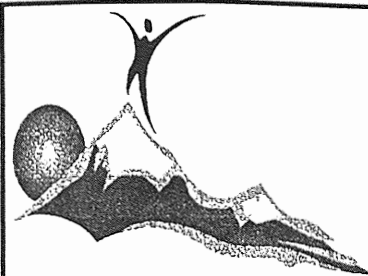
It is not easy being a female female impersonator, or a female impersonator impersonator. It takes flamboyance, confidence and a bit of attitude, said Gotta Slott, whose outfit and bright lipstick made her look like a psychedelic candy striper.

In the end it is mainly the clothes that make the queen -- "having a huge wardrobe," Slott opined.

One question is what drives participants to take part in the ultimate dressup, which some may see as reinforcing negative female stereotypes or even portraying women as objects.

Resplendent in a super-puffy pink wig, blue dress, gold boots, an apron and extra padding on her rear end, Miss Lady Multi said for her it was a way of expressing herself.

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Buffalo Belles, PO Box
1701, Amherst, NY
14226-1701

Editor :
Rebecca C.
*Wench in the print
shop and envelope stuffier*
Kathy Lorraine

To contact the Buffalo
Belles:

By Phone: (716) 879-0973

By Mail:

Buffalo Belles
PO Box 1701
Amherst, NY 14226

By e-mail:

buffalo_belles@juno.com
rebeccajanec@wzrd.com

Buffalo Belles Website:

www.geocities.com/
buffalobelles/

SEX-CHANGE OPERATIONS TO BE FUNDED BY SAN FRANCISCO FOR CITY WORKERS

By BARBARA FRANKEL
DiversityInc.com
Feb. 20, 2001

The city of San Francisco, known for its progressive policies toward the gay, lesbian and transgender community, is about to be the first U.S. government entity to pay for sex-change operations for municipal employees.

A proposal before the city Board of Supervisors is expected to receive final approval and Mayor Willie Brown has indicated he will sign it within the next two weeks.

The plan, which was approved by the city Health Services Systems Board Feb. 12, would give city workers up to \$50,000 in health benefits to change gender. The city said the average male-to-female surgery costs \$37,000, while female-to-male surgery costs \$77,000. There is no firm estimate on the lifelong cost of hormone therapy, necessary for those who have changed gender. Employees would have to work for the city for at least a year before being eligible for the benefit, which the Board of Supervisors estimates could cost the city up to \$1.75 million.

"This is certainly something of great importance to the transgendered community and a positive step we support," said Kim Mills, education director of the Washington, D.C.-based Human Rights Campaign, a gay, lesbian and transgender advocacy group.

There have not yet been any successful efforts to have private health insurers pick up the costs of these operations and follow-up care.

San Francisco's trailblazing in gay and transgendered rights is nothing new. The city's 1995 anti-discrimination law was a trendsetter, along with its domestic-partner benefits.

The current discussion over sex-change operation benefits occurred after a 1997 city of San Francisco Human Rights Commission report entitled, "Investigation Into Discrimination Against Transgendered People".

In that report, the city found that "Transgendered people need legislative support. They need enlightened practitioners in all the professions that serve them. They need allies who can help obtain and protect their civil rights. The transgendered community is growing, and the social freedom of its members will benefit everyone because we will all be freed from the prison of one more prejudice."

The American Boyz, Inc.

A national organization for people who were born female but who feel that is not a complete or accurate assessment of who they are (FTMs, butches, genderqueers, masculine 'women', and an unlimited number of other identities) and our significant others, friends, families and allies (SOFFAs). Northeast Boyz & SOFFAS 351 Pleasant St. PMB 130 Northampton, MA 01060 email: zane_barlow@yahoo.com

NANCY'S



PERSPECTIVE

Hi Belles,

I hated missing the February meeting, but my boss is starting to get onto my excuse for calling in sick every month. He's not buying I have PMS! Besides, it was cold that night and I was just enjoying the warmth of my humble abode after having survived 73mph winds and no heat the night before.

I also missed the Safe Sex talk, but that isn't going to stop me from telling you some things I've learned on the subject. My apologies if you heard some of these tips at the meeting, or if I'm repeating something you already know. I'm inclined to think I'm up-to-speed on the subject since I have no known communicable illness, and I've never been pregnant (to my knowledge).

Safe Sex is really an important issue. Lots of BAD things can happen if you are not careful. I won't paint a picture, but use your imagination. I would suggest the number one Safe Sex practice is abstinence. Then, in no particular order: (1) Always use a condom, or plastic wrap at least; (2) Have a friend do it for you or two friends do it in front of you; (3) Rent an XXX movie dealing with a subject you have only dreamed about; (4) Have sex by yourself remembering back to those days when you were 12 years old, and just getting started; (5) Keep away from farm animals (very important); (6) Keep at least a two foot space between you and your partner; (7) Pay some extra money to your doctor and have him run a background check on someone you have your eye on; (8) Remain fully clothed when having sexual relations; (9) Wear a swim mask when kissing; (10) Never insert any body part into a place you know nothing about, and finally, call a 900 number and help keep someone's old maid aunt employed.

I'm sure there are other things you can do to practice Safe Sex, so write them down and we'll exchange thoughts at a future meeting.

Take care, spring is coming!!

Your sister,
Nancy

CROSS-DRESSER BRINGS REALITY TO CLASS FOR POLICE

Roni Lang, a 68-year-old man in women's clothes, shares with officers the transgender views on issues By Maxine Bernstein of the (Portland) Oregonian Staff February 8, 2001 Roni Lang routinely strides into a classroom of Portland police officers, wearing a wig, form-fitting skirt, hose and bright pumps.

"I'm Roni, and I'm a cross-dresser," Lang says, telling the officers how eye shadow, long nails and high-heeled shoes are comfortable and enjoyable to wear. But beneath the glitzy jewelry and garb is a 69-year-old man with three children from a past marriage that lasted 14 years.

Roni's presentation to police is part of a new communications class on transgender issues. It comes at a time when Portland has expanded its civil rights ordinance by extending protections to transsexuals, cross-dressers and other transgendered people. "It's a tough audience," Roni said. "It's not a subject a lot of people like to talk about. But the more informed they are about the transgender population, the less fear they will have."

"The hour long class for police began in November and will continue through September as part of annual in-service training for all sworn officers in the Portland Police Bureau. "The object here is to make people aware of special needs communities," said Capt. Robert Kauffman, head of the bureau's training division.

Kauffman said the class is timely because of the city ordinance change, which provides civil protections to everyone from those have had sex change operations to those who consider themselves members of the opposite gender. The other goal is to ensure the bureau reacts appropriately to officers who might be undergoing sex changes.

"It's a fact we have transgender, transsexual employees," Kauffman said. "This is an attempt to let our folks know that these folks need to be treated with respect and dignity like everybody else."

"Roni who is co-chairman of the bureau's sexual minorities roundtable, wants to provide police with a general understanding of transgendered people and how they might react to police in various situations. "A lot of cross-dressing people are in the closet. But they may get dressed up late at night and just drive around," Roni said. That was what he did when he was still married and feared his cross-dressing might jeopardize his job and family.

"Police should know that the people will be a little more upset, scared and paranoid when police pull them over on a routine traffic stop. "Roni has found that officers are reluctant to ask questions in class. One officer questioned the need to attend the class and argued that it was against his religious convictions in a column in the police union's monthly paper, The Rap Sheet.

But Chief Mark Kroeker informed the officer he must attend the training. "It doesn't matter what your religion," Roni said. "The police need to be exposed and educated on all aspects of life. If they don't like it, that's fair. But they have to deal with it in an acceptable, professional way."

Hi Ladies,

When sending me E-mails, please use [REDACTED] when sending me letters or articles for our newsletter "The Journey". Please don't change your address book unless I send you a new E-mail address. I am very sorry for the inconvenience that I have given you and hope that you will forgive me. I use my server account to send very large documents quickly to all of you and everyone in the world. I really hope that every one understands. Thanks for your patience. Love to you all, my family. Rebecca J. Chesnutt

Tina's Valentine Ordeal

Continued from page 1

A few seconds later we heard Gerry yell, "Look OUT!"

We both turned just in time to see the car just a few feet from us and we jumped out of the way. He then swerved off around our cars and headed down Niagara.

At this point, a pickup truck pulled up and the guy said he saw the whole thing, I'll get the M. F...er!

There was another person there with a cell phone and he had called 911 when Kali had first gone to the other car. I found out later that the chase down Niagara reached 100 mph and the car ended up going over a guardrail and into the Black Rock canal.

Now it was about 5 minutes after the accident and the first to arrive were the Fire trucks. I was very worried about how I was dressed when I first got hit, but after Kali arrived I realized there was nothing I could do about it, so I just let it go.

The Firemen came over and asked me if I was all right.

I answered, "yes except for my knee."

They looked at it and felt it wasn't too bad and could wait for the ambulance to get there.

Now the cops were there. They came over and asked us what happened and asked me for my Drivers License. I handed it to an officer with my other "Tina" ID. Everyone so far was great with me! I was actually rather surprised but very thankful.

By this time there were probably 30 or so people about. Cops, Firemen, and now the Ambulance arrived. They came over and asked me how I was and did a quick check of me. They then asked me to come into the ambulance to get checked out. I said just one-second and went back into my car and grabbed the keys off the stuck ignition key. I would need my house key if I ever got home.

I went to the ambulance and they gave me a thorough check over and treated my knee. They asked me if I wanted to go to the Hospital and I told them I felt OK and didn't think it necessary. I felt I had way too much exposure as Tina and wanted to just go home. They called the hospital to talk to the doctor on duty. They couldn't release me without a doctor's approval. They told her (it was a lady) about my injuries and that I didn't want to go to the Hospital.

I heard them say "OK" and they handed me the phone.

She urged that I should come in and get checked out. I thought for a second and then replied that I was dressed in women's clothes.

A short pause and she said, "So? Come in and I will check you personally."

I felt very good about her reaction and agreed. All the time I was in the ambulance the Paramedics were referring to me as "Her" and "She" They were great. I will have to say that everyone I was in contact with was really great with me. They soon put me on a backboard and strapped me in. Then the neck brace. They were having problems with my hair getting in the way and they asked if it was a wig or my real hair. I said a wig and I could take it off if they wanted. They said no. It wasn't a problem and let me keep it on. I'm glad of that. It was a mess by the end of the night.

I had no bad reactions from anyone. I did find out later that one cop asked Kali, what was up with the 2 ID's:

Mistress Kali explained, "Tina is a Crossdresser and we were just coming home from a support meeting and I was following her," and left it at that.

I would like to add that I have a strong feeling that it would have been much different if I were the guilty person. Being the victim of a drunk driver put me on their side right from the beginning.

The ride to the hospital was bumpy but short. Once there, I was wheeled into the hall next to the examination rooms. About 5 minutes later another gurney was wheeled in and put behind me. I could hear the guy yelling with pain and he sounded very drunk. I soon realized it was the guy that had hit me.

The hospital staff quickly got me away from him and into a room. Several nurses checked me out and then the doctor who I had talked to before came in and looked me over. They checked me all over and asked if my back or neck hurt. I told them they felt fine. I also told them I was wearing a corset and she said that might have saved me from back problems! A little attention to my knee and a tetanus shot and I was done.

Our next stop was at the downtown Police precinct to file a report on the "Malicious Intent" charge. (The guy trying to run Kali and I over.) The woman cop there was rather nasty and must have been having a bad day. She was being rather crude and we were tired and didn't want to hear it, so we left. Holly drove us back the following day to file the charges.

I want to say at this time that Kali and Gerry were with me the whole time and never left me. They were keeping all my problems and me in order. Talking to people, filling out forms and just comforting me. I owe them so much for their help and support! Also a big thank you to Holly who helped drive Kali and I around the next day and helped to find my car after the accident.

That was the last kick in the butt! The Buffalo Police had towed my car a small distance to a side street and left it there. I thought that it had been towed to the impound. Kali and Gerry had emptied all my things out of the car, but couldn't get into the trunk because I had taken the key off the ignition key and had it with me. When I finally got back to get my tools out of the trunk, they were all gone. I had put a spare set of keys under the front bumper and in the accident they were exposed. Someone found them and helped themselves to the contents. Nice people!

When I'm out on the road, I'm always watching for drunk drivers, but if you can't see them you are in Gods hands! I'm so thankful for good friends!

Next year, I would just like a box of chocolates like everyone else!

Tina Marie

Kathy's Notes

The February meeting was a great success. Meeting upstairs in our alternative room posed no problems. We had a good turnout to hear Phyllis from AIDS ALIANCE give a talk on safe sex. Her talk was both informative and humorous. She brought along quite an assortment of protective devices to hand out to the group. Condoms, Dental dams, and the most popular, flavored lubricants! Which can be used for other purposes in a pinch-like a topping for ice-cream! For those who missed the meeting, we were left with a good supply, so help yourself. And use them if you are in anything but a long-term relationship.



Camille held a short business meeting to discuss this and that. The main one being the Cause for Celebration party on the 24th. Hope some of you were able to make this major event down at the Convention Center. We had our usual pizza. If attendance keeps growing at the meetings the way it has been lately, we'll soon be forced to get more than one sheet pizza to feed the group. As usual, there was a complement of snacks and drinks provided by Jo. Jo, by the way, has taken on the duties of snack mistress and is doing a fine job of keeping our cabinet full of the kibble and bits we love.

Following the meeting, many of the girls headed downtown to Secrets for a little imbibing. For a little change, a few of us headed over to a bar on Franklin St. called Fugazi's. It was very nice, I know I'll be back there again. Maybe next time without the gift certificate that got us there to start out with:)

Renewals

It seems every year I write this same paragraph or two. If you've been in the group for awhile, you know the one. Well, wouldn't want to disappoint any of you so I will do it one more time. THIS IS YOUR LAST NEWSLETTER IF YOU DON'T RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP!!!!

Each year we go through the same thing. Why are the renewals coming in so slow? So I looked at last year's March issue and sure enough, the same thing. Only last year we had 34 out of 64 back in the fold. This year, we've slipped to 29 out of 69. This really got me curious, so I looked back even further. '99 didn't have the figure, but '98 had 15 out of 49.

The interesting thing is how we end up with more members by the end of the year than the previous one. So if you are one who hasn't anted up, let's get the show on the road. And how does one know what they owe? If you know, go ahead skip to next section. For those unknowing poor souls, read on. (I really wouldn't be doing this if on going to the PO Box today, there was a letter from a member asking how much she owes).

On the envelope that this missive comes in, right next to your name are a couple of letters and numbers. Now if you are one of the good people who've already paid, you'll have PD01 next to it. For the 40 who haven't paid, you'll find F# or A# for membership status (Full or Associate) Of course the # symbol is really a number which is in dollars. Most will have 25, but those who joined last year will be less or an A. OK? Maybe I should just save this to disc so I don't have to write it again next year.

"The Journey" by E-mail?

Since more than half of the members have an E-mail address, we've kicked around the idea of sending it to those who choose so that way. Right now we are producing this journal with MS Publisher. It could be sent in that format, but is quite slow. With my AOL account, it takes about 7 minutes to download when Rebecca sends it my way for printing and mailing.

What we would like to do is acquire a copy of Adobe Acrobat to use in sending it, since just about everyone has the capability for that. Or can download it free. Of course, it would really be nice if someone has a copy already we could use.

There are several advantages for both sides. For you, the recipient, no longer the trek to your mailbox on these cold, snowy days. You could print it out on your own printer and get to see all the color that is used in the headings, photographs, etc. Or one could just easily save them on your disc to enjoy any time.

For the group, a considerable savings in postage and printing costs. Probably we could even work a discount for those receiving it this way. If you are interested or have a copy of Adobe we could use, contact me on the phone or at kathyloir@aol.com.

Continued on Page 7

KATHY'S NOTES Continued from page 6**Bathroom Etiquette**

I hate to bring this up, but it must be said. Recently while at Secrets, I was waiting to use the ladies room. One of our new members vacated and I went in to find the seat up and the water running. A simple rule is to pee how you are presenting, at least in a public place. If you want to hike your skirt up when at home and let her rip, that is your business, but not in public, please. In this case, if you want to pee that way, then use the men's room. The culprit in this case didn't even lock the door. Not a pretty sight to see. 'Nuff said? I hope so.

Pen pal wanted

We've received a request from a girl for anyone who is interested in becoming a pen pal with her. She is a CD who would love to be able to come to our meetings, but for the time being, this is rather difficult. Milton is an articulate writer who seems quite sincere in his feelings.

You may contact him at:**Milton Lighthall #00B0213****PO Box 340****Collins Correctional Facility Collins, NY
14034-0340****Faux Queens** – Continued from Page 2

"I love to dress up and to ultra-express feminine aspects and play with them and get into the juicy skin of it," said Multi, who gave her Earth name as D.J. Polywog and her age as "old enough to know better."

Others agreed that dressing up made them feel more feminine, while still others said they were just out to have a good time or were encouraged by male drag-queen friends. Most, like Slott, said female drag queens are able to turn unflattering stereotypes of women on their heads.

"It is like reclaiming the terms of how woman are defined," said Slott, otherwise known as Kathleen Morford. "In this way we get to embrace feminine stereotypes."

The event consisted of a question-and-answer session followed by a talent show where the participants took turns gyrating, slinking and pouting across the small stage, sometimes simulating acts that would earn a movie an adult rating.

The crowd cheered them on, hooting at some of the more lascivious acts and showing their appreciation by throwing money at the stage. The judges preferred to let the contestants earn their support in exchange for free drinks.

"If you really want to show a drag queen your love give 'em some money," Toosday exhorted before starting the show.

Continued on Page 9

10 Most Damaging Myths about Transmen and FTM's

10. All FTM's come from the lesbian community, and after transition are heterosexual (that is, attracted to women).
9. Transsexualism/transgenderism can be "cured" by psychotherapy. Transsexual men are really just lesbians.
8. FTM's did not exist until after World War II, with the advent of hormone therapy and sex-reassignment surgery.
7. Female-to-males are far rarer than male-to-female transsexuals.
6. Transmen seek to live as and be recognized as male in order to obtain male privilege and economic advantages.
5. All transmen exhibit stereotypically male behavior and want to be as macho as possible.
4. Taking testosterone makes female-to-male transsexuals much more aggressive and angry than they were before taking hormones.
3. All FTM's want genital reconstruction as the driving force of their transition (not necessarily the social aspects that go along with masculinity).
2. Historically, all women only chose to live as men to pursue careers that were otherwise unavailable to them, to seek economic opportunities, or to justify lesbian relationships.
1. Transmen are really just butch lesbians who change sex to justify same-sex relationships or to avoid harassment.

Plus-Size Ladies Lingerie Boom Giving Relief to Cross-Dressers

by Ian Blecher

Ladies who lunch a little too often—the size-16 smart set—are enjoying a fashion revolution these days.

They have their own Italian designers, like Gianfranco Ferré and Marina Rinaldi. They have their own floor at Saks Fifth Avenue and their own fashion magazine, *Mode*. They even have their own fashion shows: Lane Bryant hosted a big one in September: Queen Latifah modeled.

Soon, Their Highnesses won't even have to cram their thighnesses into size-12 Tommy Hilfiger. Next fall, the American clothing giant will expand his Tommy Hilfiger Woman line to cover sizes 14 to 22. "There's obviously customer demand," said Hilfiger spokesperson Caren Bell.

Plus-size women have never had it better. But what about, you know, fake women? It turns out that the fashion world's sudden fixation upon plus-size females has an unexpected beneficiary: boys who like to dress like girls. "You can get [clothes] all over the place now!" proclaimed Lady Bunny, a New York drag queen who has performed at clubs including Spa.

And it's about time, girl! Until the recent wave of plus-size fashion, members of New York's substantial cross-dressing community were having a hell of a time finding designer clothes that fit. "Men have those thick manly wrists and that barreled-out ribcage," Lady Bunny explained. Wide in the chest and small in the hips, even short fellas have a tough time squeezing themselves into a traditionally-cut size 12.

"I'm in a constant search for clothes," said Sultana, a 40 DD drag queen and regular belly dancer at bars and clubs in Greenwich Village. "I need something sexy and revealing."

In the past, many of the city's frustrated cross-dressers turned to custom tailoring to meet their clothing needs. But now, the sudden surge of plus-size designers—and accommodating salespeople in plus-size departments—has these fashionable denizens dancing around in their 8th St. stilettos. Said Sultana: "It's definitely getting easier ... we tell each other where to get things."

Indeed, New York's cross-dressers now have a dizzying array of options. On a recent morning on the 10th floor at Saks—"Salon Z," to the big-boned lady or gentleman in the know—the department was empty, except for an occasional salesperson strutting about. The floor was studded with wide-hipped mannequins.

Cross-dressing customers have been an open secret in Salon Z for some time. Sales associate Lela Krtnic said that these shoppers tend to fall into two categories: liberated cross-dressers who have no qualms about asking for a fitting room,

and clandestine ones who claim to be shopping for someone else.

"I can guess about them," Ms. Krtnic said of the latter category. She recalled a male customer who claimed to be buying for his wife but placed a dress up against his chest and exclaimed, "Oh, wow, that looks great!" When Ms. Krtnic asked if the customer's wife was tall, the man replied, "Yes. Probably my height." "That made me wonder," Ms. Krtnic said.

Over at Bloomingdale's, salespeople offered similar testimony. "There are some nice guys," said Arlene, a sales associate in Bloomie's Ellen Tracy department. "They come in here, they know the salesperson, they go right to her with their underwear in a bag—a stuffed bra, everything."

What's more, cross-dressers tend to go for the pricey threads, Arlene said. And they're polite, too. "I'd rather have men than women," Arlene insisted. "The men are much nicer. Much nicer to work with." She mentioned a customer who she claimed was a coach for the Yankees. "The easiest customer I have," she said. "But he's buying strictly for his wife." Joanna Martinez, the manager of Saks' Salon Z, said her store has a favorite cross-dressing client, too. "We respect him as much as some of our female clients, if not more," Ms. Martinez said. "We dress him from top to bottom. He gets as much attention as the next guy—I mean, girl."

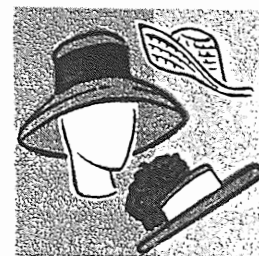
Ms. Martinez confessed that dealing with a cross-dressing clientele will occasionally trip her up: "Sometimes I'll think someone's a cross-dresser, but he'll really be a woman. Some of these women just look like men."

But by and large, cross-dressing customers are a fashion-savvy treat, salespeople said. Another Salon Z regular is a fortysomething sales executive whose own wife is well aware of his predisposition toward women's fashions, said sales associate Kay Connaughton. He's also a customer who has personally benefited from the explosion of plus-size women's fashions—the man is technically a size 18. Ms. Connaughton said, but his hips are too slim for most 18's. Therefore, he's come to favor Italian cuts—Gianfranco Ferré and Rinaldi are favorites.

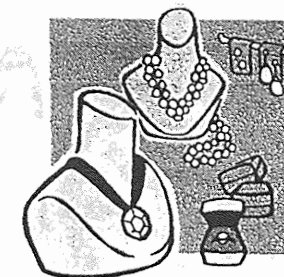
"He's very fashion-forward," Ms. Connaughton gushed. "He's very comfortable about himself. Whenever I suggest a new fashion—the new leathers or whatever—he's always open."

Everywhere, New York's cross-dressers are celebrating their options! options! options! Lady Bunny said she goes to Lane Bryant uptown for housewife chic. Sultana, meanwhile, has been hitting every plus-size store from the garment district to the Upper East Side. "Macy's is nice," she said. "Very incognito ... Saks, too." Sultana took her Mom to Saks, in fact—but not in drag.

Continued on Page 9



FASHION, STYLE ... AND YOU



THE FASSION DIVA

Q: Why is it such a bad thing to sleep with your makeup on?

A: Your skin, like you, needs to "breathe." Sleep is when our minds and bodies are rejuvenated. Hair and nails grow more quickly during these hours than at any other time of the day. Your skin needs to be free of products which will simply block your pores and inevitably cause breakouts. Consider this: If a patch to help stop smoking can be absorbed through your skin, then so can your makeup!

Moreover, it is before bed when you should give special attention to thoroughly cleansing your skin from the day's grime and oil build-up and use products which will leave you with a soft, firm, wrinkle-free, luminous complexion in the morning. After cleansing and toning, choose a skin care regimen (or assorted products) which works for you and stay with it. Read the ingredients; items with alpha-hydroxy components (vegetable and fruit acids) will help your own skin to renew itself, ridding itself of dead cells. Thus, you won't awake with clogged pores and troubled skin, but a wide-awake, ready-to-paint "canvas" for the next day.

Plus Size Boom Continued from Page 8

Sultana also raved about the treatment during a recent visit to Express. "I didn't show up in women's clothes," Sultana said, "but by the end they figured it out. They even gave me my own dressing room, with all the dresses I wanted."

How do the designers themselves feel about these customers? Fashion people tend to be rather liberal folk, so it's not surprising to hear the makers of plus-size women's clothes embrace their cross-dressing clients. "This is the first I have heard of this—but anything is possible in New York," Mr. Ferré said from Italy. "The extraordinary capacity of people in [that] city and those who live there is to adapt ... to

everything." Said Marina Rinaldi vice president Julia Larese de Santo: "A customer is a customer."

For New York's cross-dressing consumers, this welcome fashion trend figures to continue. After all, Rubenesque shoppers account for 27 percent of the women's apparel market—or \$26 billion a year. Tommy Hilfiger won't be the last to jump on the plus-size bandwagon. Once unimaginable, it's not so crazy to dream of a brave new fashion world, with size-16 Versace gowns and Gucci corsets—and legions of happy, fitted, fabulous boys.

"We all have the same goal in mind," said a salesperson at Express. "And that goal is totally fashion."

Faux Queens – Continued from Page 7

Perhaps the final arbiter of the faux queens' authenticity were the male drag queens in attendance, who gave a hearty stamp of approval to their female counterparts.

Lucia Love, a local actor and award-winning drag queen, said the idea of females impersonating

him was odd but at the same time wonderful -- not in the least because his favorite movie, "Victor/Victoria," was about a woman impersonating a male female impersonator.

"Drag queens would be nowhere without women," said Love.



COMING EVENTS



DUE TO THE POSSIBILITY OF LAST MINUTE
CHANGES, CALL TO VERIFY THE TIME AND
PLACE OF EVENTS

- MARCH 10** **BUFFALO BELLES REGULAR MEETING 6PM**
- MARCH 21-25** **15TH ANNUAL IFGE CONVENTION**
Chicago, Illinois (info: 610-759-1761)
- APRIL 7** **ROCHESTER CD NETWORK MEETING**
- APRIL 14** **BUFFALO BELLES REGULAR MEETING 6 PM**
- MAY 5** **ROCHESTER CD NETWORK MEETING**
- MAY 12** **BUFFALO BELLES REGULAR MEETING 6 PM**
- MAY 10-13** **SPRING FLING 2001, Provincetown, Massachusetts**
For more information: www.tcne.org
- JUNE 3** **PRIDE PARADE & RALLY**
Parade starts at 1:00pm, down Elmwood Ave. Rally starts at 2:30pm,
Bidwell Parkway and Elmwood Ave. Tea Dance starts at 5:00pm
location TBA. Last year we made history (herstory?) by having an information
table. This year wee'll have float in the parade. We already have 3 volunteers to
ride in the float. Think about participating or volunteering in some way.
- JUNE 6 -10** **BE-ALL CONFERENCE - DETROIT 2001**
Detroit, Michigan (info: 313-719-3267; www.xroads.org)
- JUNE 9** **BUFALO BELLES REGULAR MEETING 6 PM**
- JULY 1** **1st GLBT FILM FESTIVAL Downtown Buffalo**
- JUNE 10** **PRIDE GOLF TOURNAMENT**

FEBRUARY MEETING ATTENDANCE

Jean H.
Danalyn D.
Kathy L.
Colleen R.
Camille H.
Joan L.
Brenda H.
Jo S.

Tina M.
Victoria C.
Jana F.
Ann A.
Denise P.
Michelle F.
Rebecca C.
Trissa J.

Andy M.
Jen M.
Isabel (Guest)
Phyllus (Guest)